

**ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE**

A trowel blade includes a pre-finished, hardened and tempered blade having at least two apertures formed therethrough. Each aperture has a cross section tapering from a larger opening in a bottom of the blade to a smaller opening in a top of the blade. At least two cleats are also provided, each cleat being disposed in one of the apertures and each cleat having a lower portion, deformed within the aperture to have a frusto-conical shape mating with internal walls of the aperture. Each cleat also has an upper, inverted frusto-conical portion having a lower surface mating with an upper surface of the blade, and an upper shoulder. The upper shoulder of the upper portion extends upwardly from the lower surface of the upper portion and outwardly from a longitudinal axis of the cleat. The cleats are formed of an integral, rigid material and are collectively configured to provide a substantially rigid interface between the pre-finished blade and a removable handle of the pre-finished blade.